

## WorkFirst Post Welfare Supports

January 2005

### What happens when WorkFirst families leave welfare?

WorkFirst is built on the goal of helping families move out of poverty by increasing their income through work. The program continues to provide services to families after they leave welfare that help parents stay employed and increase their earnings so they can become financially stable and avoid going back on welfare.

### What supports are available to employed former welfare families?

- **Support services:** Available for up to six months after a family leaves welfare to pay for work expenses such as transportation and clothing costs.
- **Job search assistance and career advancement planning:** Available for up to one year after the family leaves welfare.
- **WorkFirst Post-Employment Labor Exchange (WPLEX) call center:** WPLEX provides valuable job retention and job search services for up to one year after parents leave welfare, including resume updates, interviewing refreshers, job referrals and assistance with on-the-job issues. The center operates evenings and Saturdays to accommodate workers' schedules.
- **Child care:** Subsidies available through Working Connections Child Care to all working families with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- **Tuition assistance:** Covers the cost of going to school, including tuition, books and fees. Available to all working families with income at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level.
- **Child support:** The state keeps most of a family's child support while they are on welfare. Once a family leaves welfare, however, they receive any current child support collected on their behalf by the state.
- **Other financial supports:** Families continue to qualify for basic food assistance and federal earned income and child tax credits based on their family size, expenses and income.
- **Medical benefits:** WorkFirst families receive Medicaid for up to one year after they leave welfare. Children qualify for Medicaid until family income reaches 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Parents may qualify for low-cost Basic Health Plan medical insurance after they lose their Medicaid coverage.

### WASHINGTON WorkFirst

- In tax year 2003, almost 335,000 families received the Earned Income Tax Credit to bring over \$539 million into the state.
- The number of families on welfare in Washington dropped 41 percent since WorkFirst began, from nearly 96,000 in 1997 to about 57,000 in December 2004.
- Over 146,000 parents have left welfare and stayed off.
- The proportion of people on welfare in Washington is at its lowest point in more than 30 years.

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit  
[www.workfirst.wa.gov](http://www.workfirst.wa.gov)

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